

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 3-20 are all the claims pending in the application. The subject matter of Claim 2 has been incorporated into Claim 1 and new Claim 20 has been added. Support for new Claim 20 is provided by, for example, Claim 8 and page 15 of the specification, lines 16-21.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,265,479 to Ichikawa et al. ("Ichikawa"), and Claims 2-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Ichikawa.

As indicated above, Claim 2 has been cancelled and the feature of the invention previously recited therein has been recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 under Section 102(e) based upon Ichikawa has been overcome. With regard to the remaining rejection, Application responds as follows:

Ichikawa et al. discloses a natural rubber latex having low total nitrogen content. However, the process described in Ichikawa comprises the step of a centrifugation treatment, which removes non-rubber components thereby impacting the antioxidation and vulcanization acceleration of the material.

On the contrary, the natural rubber of the present claimed invention as defined by amended Claim 1 is produced by deproteinizing treatment without separation of non-rubber components by centrifugation. This treatment results in better physical properties of the natural rubber in terms of antioxidation and vulcanization acceleration by maintaining non-rubber components. See page 2, lines 7 to 17 of the present specification.

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Appl. No. 10/509,034  
Amendment Under 37 CFR 1.111

Further, the Examiner's attention is directed to Example 1 (using natural rubber type [a] containing total nitrogen content of 0.16% without centrifugation after deproteinization) or Example 2 (using natural rubber type [b] containing total nitrogen content of 0.19% without centrifugation after deproteinization) and Example 4 (using natural rubber type [c] containing total nitrogen content of 0.17% with centrifugation after deproteinization), and the data shown in Table 3. Table 3 shows that the resistance indices to heat aging of the materials prepared in accordance with Example 1, Example 2 and Example 4 are 52, 51 and 37, respectively. These results mean that the natural rubber of the present claimed invention exhibits excellent resistance to heat aging.

Claims 3-19 depend directly or indirectly from amended Claim 1. Thus, Applicants believe that Claims 3-19 are not anticipated or obvious based on Ichikawa for at least the same reasons that Claim 1 is not anticipated or obvious based on Ichikawa.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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